

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the

K I N G

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VVHITE-HALL,

January xxx. 167 $\frac{5}{6}$.

By *HENRY BAGSHAW*, D. D.

Rector of *St. Botolphs Bishopsgate*, and Chaplain
to the Lord HIGH-TREASURER of *England*.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *William Godbid*, and are to be sold by *Moses Pitt*,
at the *Angel* against the little North-door
of *St. Paul's Church*. 1676.

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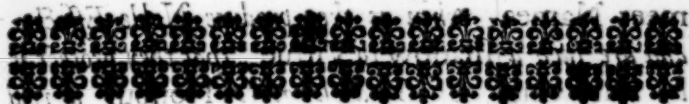
W H I T E H A L L

January xxv. 1678.

By HENRY BUSHAW, D.D.
Rector of St. Pauls Cathedral, and Chaplain
to the Lord High-Treasurer of England.

L O N D O N.
Printed by J. Streater, at the North-door
of St. Pauls Church. 1678.

It is not without great Joy, that I have seen this



To the Right Honourable

THOMAS

EARL of DANBY,

Lord High-TREASURER of ENGLAND,

And One of the LORDS of His MAJESTIES

MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL.

MY LORD,

I Have adventured upon the Publication of this Discourse to the World, as a poor Testimony of my Obedience to Your Lordships Pleasure. Uprightness is my Subject; and the Great Example of it is a PRINCE, to whose Memory you pay homage. Religion shines in such Instances, and borrows new Majesty from the Pattern; nay Martyrdom it self looks Royal, and the Blood (thus shed) paints its Glory.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

It is one Mistake in the World, to cry down Titles as meer Names; when as they produce Noble Effects, and are such a shadow to Virtue, that they protect it by following. If Goodness gives Honour a real grace, Honour pays it back in opinion; therefore the usefulness that is in it, renders it a fit Object of our regard: However alone it cannot profit the Persons, without Goodness be joyned.

You (MY LORD) have a great share in Temporal Dignity; Your try'd worth has recommended You to Your Prince, and the stedfast Integrity of Your Actings: The first provokes Envy, and the second Love to acknowledge it. Your Fastness to the CHURCH is as well known, and the employment of Your Power to oblige. May God continue You an Instrument in His Service, establish You with His Grace, and preserve in You a Goodness as well as Greatness of Name; which is the earnest Prayer of,

MY LORD,

*Your Lordships most obedient
Servant and Chaplain,*

HENRY BAGSHAW



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P S A L M xxxvij. 37.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.

IT has been a perplexing Question in all Ages, and by all sorts of Religions entertain'd; why Good and Evil should be blended and mixt; and without any show of choice dispensed amongst Men in the secret course of God's Providence? This indifferency of acting in humane Affairs, has made Heathens to conclude, that

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an uncertain Chance governs the World; nay, it has further prevailed upon true Worshippers to suspend the exercise of their Faith, though not utterly to destroy the root of it. And such a kind of doubting the Church was subject to in David's time; whence this Psalm was written for their cure, who through weakness of flesh took sense for their guide, and the outward surface of things for their argument to build on. By the one they fell under a shortness of sight; by the other they had emptiness for their object. Therefore he sets them in a lure way of considering Events, and that is to mark and examin them with their understandings; to take their flight beyond present appearances to the ends and periods of things; where the substance of Beings is discern'd, because the truth of their state is laid open. Otherwise we should be all apt to mistake, and ready to pronounce a false judgment.

So a little before my Text, he acquaints us what imagination he had when he first saw the wicked man, whom he presently compares to the green bay tree; as looking fresh and gay in the ornament of power, though blood likely was the moisture that fed it. His laurels and his crimes they flourished together, and an impious hand became the planter of his glory; so that the Prophet thought at the first glimpse the prosperity of

of his condition to be most desirable: But lo! the exit of all; *He passed by, and was not; yea I sought him, (says the Psalmist) but he could not be found:* As if all that greatness he beheld, were rather some *image* in sleep (where *fancy* sports with its own *creation*) than a real object without, presented to the beholder.

Who is it now he opposes to that wicked man, or propounds to us devoutly to regard? It is the *perfect* and *upright* Worshipper; and the *end* he assigns him is *peace*, or a glorious reward, notwithstanding those seeming *blasts* in his lifetime, and the apparent ruins of his state, when (like a Cedar cut down) he leaves upon the earth the sad reverence of his fall.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.

I know the *Septuagint* read these words in the abstract, which is followed too by some other Translations; but the *Hebrew-Text*, and the scope of the Psalmist (not to speak of our own Bibles) will justify the sense I have mentioned. And so I intend to handle them, where we may consider three things:

First, A Duty enjoyn'd: Mark and behold; that is, *as from a watch-tower look far off and observe.*

Secondly, The Subject wherein it is employ'd:

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The perfect and upright man ; which includes also the opposite party , the evil doer.

Thirdly , The Fruit or Effect of this Observation : Which is to discern a distinctness of end , namely , the upright man's peace or reward ; which necessarily supposes the others punishment.

I shall cast the two first into one proposition , which is this :

That we ought to be heedful Observers of God's Providential Rule in the World , and particularly of his Dispensation to his People.

As for heeding his Rule in the general ,

1. The Usefulness of the Work ,

2. The Excellency of our Faculties calls for it.

The Usefulness of the Work ; since by an exactness of search we discover not only a *Hand* of Power , but an *Eye* of Wisdom , in turning the *Wheel* ; where all the courses of it are serviceable to God's Glory , and the intricacy of its motions brings about the accomplishment of his Designs. The result of this Discovery is increase of Faith , settlement of Mind , and a close dependency upon the Supreme. Do but regard the *Throne* above , you will regard too the *Chain* that is tyed to it ; how immoveably God holds there

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the *Links of Causes*, not to be broken off, nor alter'd, but by His special appointment. Did we thus mind the order of the whole Frame, the connexion of Events, and God's care to uphold what he has purposed, a Spirit of Atheism would quickly vanish; and the *Light* of that *Theater* we walk in, would at once convince and reform us.

2. The Excellency of our Faculties calls for such a beholding. For God has planted in us *contemplative* powers as well as *active*; nay, the pure and spiritual exercise of the Soul lyes in the former. It is the subliming of our Understandings, the exalting of our Reason, the great prerogative of our Beings, to view God and his Works: He is continually viewing them and Himself; and we show the nobleness of our descent from Him, when thus employ'd in our *speculation*.

If you regard the actions of Sense, here Brutes do surpass us; and the pleasures they enjoy, are more accurate, because they have no higher perfection to seek after: But the height of Man's Faculty, that leads him to the best Objects, it breaks the force of a sensual delight, since he has an intellectual Vision to pursue. Now a chief part of this Vision is God in his Providence; where the Mind is taken up with the sight of
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Order and Beauty in the Creation ; of Omnipotence and Knowledge in the Rule ; of Labour and Conspiracy in Beings to those Ends appointed them ; and having these things for its Idea's , it grows enlarg'd and beautified by what it receives. Whether then we attend to the advantage of the Employment , or the dignity of our own Natures , we may easily conclude , that a *considering spirit* is required of us ; which if laid aside through any carnal temptation , Man thereby as well as his Interest is forsaken.

Thus much briefly for *marking Providence* in the *general* — But that which more particularly binds us to observe , is *God's Dispensation to his People*. For God walks in his Church , as in a *Garden of Pleasure* ; He delights in those *Plants* He sets , prunes and dresses them , and shows by the singularity of His care , that they are the Favourites of his Government. The World is but *waste ground* , and altogether subject to a common influence ; the Sun enlightens , the Wind blows , the Rain waters , but the true *Husbandry* is reserv'd for the Paradise he has chosen. Here He has fix'd his Dwelling-place , and here He exhibits his loving-kindness ; all the method of his Discipline tending to the improvement of the *Soil*. Yet lest we should take wrong measures in our notice , as it relates to the governing of his
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Children, these Rules must be followed to direct us.

1. That God, who prescribes to Himself one method for eternally saving, prescribes none for temporally ruling those He saves. In the one, He acts like a *Judge*, where a certain *order* is set up; in the other, like a *Sovereign*, where a perfect *freedom* is established: So that the variety of models and forms, which are seen in the conduct of his People to happiness, ought not to infer any neglect, but the uncontrollable liberty of his Power.

2. That outward Blessings are not gifts of choice, nor the proper donatives of His hand. They may *adorn* indeed the uprightness of a cause, but not *distinguish* it; which has surer characters to be known by, and a right founded upon better Titles, than an Idolater or an Usurper can plead. We all find that even the worst of Men can urge a success, and the honour of that portion they enjoy, as a most plausible defence of their actings; therefore if *marks of Grace* were not otherwise placed, God's love to his People would be lost, nay the Justice of his Government destroyed. Thirdly, we must observe,

3. That the End of his Government being *spiritual*, he carries it on sometimes by *invisible* ways, and leads his Servants thorough a dark path,

path, though at other times he draws out his *Lights*, I mean the *miracles* of his Protection, to confirm his Church in a Belief of his Promises. So then, his Methods being various, his outward Blessings undistinguishing, and his End spiritual in his Rule, our contemplation of a Saint ought to be pure and refin'd; abstracted from those accidents he meets with in the World; and how severe soever his changes be, yet our judgment upon them should be unchangeable, fixt (like God's purpose) on his reward. The perception of things in Religion is at a *distance*, whereas Sense requires a *nearness* of the Object. To take a prospect of Nature, is to approach near to particulars; but to take a prospect of God's Government, is to stand a far off and behold. Therefore no conclusion ought we to form, but by comprehending the *Stage* of the whole Life; we must not judge upon a present view of persecution, flight, routing of Armies, and an eclipse of Glory (which the best of Princes has been subject to) but carry our Eye forward to the *last enduring of the temptation*, when he receives a crown of life.

What we are to mark in our Lord Christ, the same should be observed in his Followers; first the Sufferings of the Cross, and then the Triumphs of the Throne: To stop in the way, and divide
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our prospect, is to render it deformed; it is to fill it with *shadows*, and not with *light*; to view a hand in the cloud, gathering together *storms* and no *blessings*. Whoever would think to know the beautiful proportions of any Being, must consider it at the full, and not in the separated and divided parts of it; so the work of Providence in governing a Saint, ought entirely and perfectly to be looked upon. For we do but *libel* it by taking it in pieces, but we learn to *adore* it in the whole.

Pythagoras makes his Wiseman to be θεαμὸν ὄντων καὶ γινομένων, a Spectator of Beings and Events; and to enter into the World, as into an *Olympick* Game, there to regard all passages; but this necessarily does infer a suspense of judgment 'till the prize be obtained; which should he let loose to all the accidents of the Combat, in stead of wisdom he would act folly; since it is the Eye of a Fool that is always ranging to an uncertainty. Who is there can possibly determin the conditions of Men from an immediate beholding of their course here? Does not God often shuffle humane Affairs, turn and cast them, and make his outward Administration in States a kind of mockery of Man's Knowledge, where the difference of persons is lost for some time, and consequently the ability of discerning? If any difference be found, it is

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that which offends; and that is, when the perfect and upright Man falls, and (what adds weight to his overthrow) perhaps caused by the hand of some prosperous triumphing Malefactor; which seems at the first sight, as ill an Object of contemplation, as the Picture of a Temple burnt and destroyed, with the Breaker up of that Temple passed by. Yet however it becomes a Christian to mark, and to keep his Eye fixt in the midst of turnings; the patience of Faith is expected from him in his standing, that so the evidence of Faith may succeed. — Which brings me to the Third Particular in my Text, viz.

The Fruit or Effect of this Observation. And that is to discern a distinctness of End betwixt the righteous and the wicked. For the end of the righteous is peace, or a glorious reward; which unavoidably supposes the others punishment. And here two Queries naturally arise:

1. Why God should defer to the last His distinguishing care of his People, and not appoint them his Blessings in a *bright course* of his Providence?

2. In what respects a distinctness of End becomes visible to an Observer?

In answer to the First, concerning God's delays of distinguishing his People, some alledge the absoluteness of his Dominion, as a most satisfying ground

ground for such a disposal. But here the doubt still returns: For Dominion may be a Rule to *subject* our Wills, but not to *settle* our Understandings. The Mind of Man is too free to be bound up with that Notion, and still seeks to enquire further. What then will fully satisfy it in its search? It must be convinced of the Justice and Wisdom of his Proceedings; for these are two Attributes that strike our *Reason* with the excellency of their lustre, and can silence the cavils of a Disputer. If then his Justice and Wisdom may be made out for appointing such a way, no room is left for any scruple to get in.

Now *Justice respects us* in its exercise, whereas *Power* is but a *Minister* to him that uses it. And how Justice respects us will appear, in that our corrupt Natures require the method of an Affliction, and the Principle of Grace (there infus'd) needs sharp proofs to corroborate it in its acts, and to testify its soundness to the World.

He that will but consider the corruption of our Natures, how deeply printed their *stains* are, and by what a sinfulness of practice farther confirmed; must needs conclude, that those Evils we suffer are truly *penal*; and consequently our meriting of the scourge, acquits our Judge from the tyranny of inflicting it. The Rod that humbles our carnal *strength*, it loads too our *consciences*

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with its burden; and tells us when we are bruised, that we have *guilt* likewise, to compleat the misery of our torment. God, *who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*, brings no pain upon any of us, but what our own sins duly deserve: The *storm* comes from *above*; but it is some *vapour below*, that has bred it. Earth and Man's heart are alike fatal in their productions; they nourish in them the *seeds* of a tempest, and sending them up towards *Heaven*, darken that Region where they come, and turn its *influence* to oppress us. Upon this account, none of us can repine or tax God's dealings, that will but severely examin himself, and read the sinfulness of his own actings; whence he may soon pick a Comment, out of the blackness of that Evidence, to expound and interpret the sad accidents of his life, as a convincing Argument of God's Justice.

Again, the Principle of Grace (infus'd into our Natures) does justly exact the discipline of suffering; that so it may grow up and spread in our Souls, under the benefit of that tryal; and show the Divineness of its original, by all the *hardship* of perseverance. Faith, Hope, and Charity, abide weak in their *infancy*, when untryed; and (which is another reproach to that state) the truth too of their *birth* is suspected. Nothing gives

gives the spiritual Man such life and vigour as a temptation: Not that of it *self* it can cause either, but *occasionally* it conduces to his improvement; for affording him the matter of a resistance, his *Graces* are thereby quicken'd and rais'd; and when the temptation is beaten off, their *true birth from Heaven* is discover'd by the nobleness of their Conquest. So then, those temporal evils God sends, are to be reckon'd no otherwise, than a *just diet* He prescribes; their ends and uses are proper to the Patient; whereby the equity of the Sender is always preserv'd, though the *Instrument* many times that conveys them, contracts *guilt* in the Service. Where now is the wrong offer'd a Saint, if vast rewards be design'd, and crosses only decreed to fit and prepare him? He that can complain here of Injustice, may as well complain of hard seasons that ripen fruits, or the laying of *Isaac* under the *knife*, which secur'd the *Inheritance* to the Child.

As God's Justice is thus clear'd; so his *Wisdom* is no less evident, in the appointment of those troubles in life before mentioned.

For it is an act of *Wisdom* to sate wages with works; and so Heaven being the highest pay, He wisely exacts from us the highest performance. But this in *suffering* consists; which as it is the best proof of our love to God, so the
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most eminent mark of our courage ; by how much the greater difficulty we undergo of repressing our fears, and keeping our selves firm and immoveable in a good purpose. Upon this score of difficulty it is, that *passive valour* is deservedly preferred before *active* ; as giving us larger proofs of a generous resolution in the Encounter. For to him that suffers, evil is *present* ; and thereby sharper upon his mind ; nay it is farther edg'd in its sharpness, by seeming to come from the *stronger party* ; which makes the force of it more terrible ; last of all, *length of time* is required for the exercise, wherein Nature is apt to flag and dissolve ; so that here three discouragements lye in his way, which yet he courageously breaks thorough : And they are, *sense of evil* ; *opinion of his enemy* ; and a *wearisome trouble of the time*. But none of these are found in him that *briskly* attempts danger ; who regards evil as *future*, and so removes the smart of its sting ; who with the mind of a *superiour* sets on it, and so learns before hand to contemn it ; lastly, who needs but a *sudden heat* to evidence his courage ; and so keeps fresh his spirits in the employ. Here then lyes the advantage of a Martyrs suffering, that he has every thing to daunt him in his cause ; whereas the Heroes of this World find easiness in their hazards, which lessens the glory of their triumph.

triumph. Hence God wisely puts us to that noble tryal of bearing the Cross, and so following our Lord; which being the utmost pitch of our resolution for his Service, Happiness is duly rated by that price He demands.

But there remains a second Query to be discussed, viz. in what respects a distinctness of End becomes visible to an Observer.

For, 1. Peace in this place cannot be limited to a temporal deliverance, though Man seems properly the judge of it; and Scripture too affords some pregnant instances of those happy periods of an Affliction: So *Noah* was freed from the tossings of the *flood*, and (like his *Ark*) rested in peace: So *Joseph* was taken from the pit and the dungeon, to end his days near the Majesty of a Throne; and *David* (the Author of this Psalm) could experimentally confirm the Mercies of a change: Others too I might reckon up, that had a sensible taste of God's Promises before they were summoned to their graves. However, should we admit it in a sense so restrained, we must exclude out of our prospect whole Armies of Saints, that neither *knew*, nor would accept deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And where is the remarkable end of these, or what pompous finishing of their lives, without you'll say *Swords and Axes* made it up, and the
Heroick

Heroick Courage of the Expecters? Either then we must take it in a wider Notion, or poorly limit it to a few; where right is not so much done them in a *record* of God's Blessings, as injury to others by our *silence*. And as a bare temporal deliverance is not here meant, so neither, in the second place,

2. Can we restrain it to Immortality of Bliss; for though that contain in it all the *substance* of *peace*, yet being an *invisible reward*, it is above the consideration of our outward man; therefore we must take it in the widest extent, where both the *Eye of Faith* and the *Eye of Sense* may joyn in the testimony.

As for the *Eye of Faith*, it is most open and cleer when the End of the Righteous is come. His Death gives it a quiet view, and the *darkness* of the *Scene* is removed by the *light of Eternity* breaking in. While he *sleeps*, it awakes, and delightfully expatiates over his Joys; for it is now like a Mariner set on shore, and stands safe upon fixt ground, whereas Shipwracks at Sea did before disturb the apprehension; so that it can with a composedness of thought contemplate his *Bliss*, answerable to the softness of his repose. Whatever distractions it might meet with in his life, they are all *buried* with the Sufferer; the doubts and scruples are taken away; and no more is
 God's

God's care of him called in question, since it sees him as it were put in possession of a glorious Inheritance. Thus a Saints decease procures a double liberty; first to himself, from the fetters of a calamity; next to the Faith of a Beholder, from the prejudices of the World.

But is the *Eye of Sense* alike capable of satisfaction? And can we be entertain'd in our outward man with a true pleasure of beholding him? We all readily grant it upon the sight of a recompence, and a successful close of the righteous Man's days. None stumbles at Providence in that *Sun-shine*; nay his bare *setting in light* has that strength of lustre, as to reflect it back upon his past troubles. But how can the Spectator be secured from falling, while he is viewing the Act of some black Tragedy; when the vail of government is drawn over a Saint, and he seems to be given up from above to the lust of his Enemies! To stand in that case seems very hard, by reason of the sadness of the spectacle. And yet even here, if we would take but direction, we may still safely look on; because there is proper matter for Sense to regard, and from thence to form the Notion of Peace.

And this is grounded upon a threefold remarque:

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2. Of the Manner.

3. Of the Consequences of his End.

First, the Cause has a *brightness* in it to strike our Senses, when we see Truth and Justice, Religion and Piety, singly maintain'd; and the Seal of Martyrdom cheerfully embraced in the midst of terrours from an armed multitude; where Power and Victory might be Pleaders of Right, but Blood and Sacrilege the Overthrowers. And so the primitive Confessors powerfully convinced the Heathen World, by a single maintenance of their Cause. Alone they triumphed in what they professed, because alone they stood up Champions to defend; whence those that saw them, fell from viewing to wonder, from wonder to love; and love easily ended in their Conversion. Neither is this instance restrained to those times, but every Age can produce one; and let God's Call but warrant the like appearance, the goodness of a Christian profession, as it will arm a Saint to acknowledge it, so it will justify him to any enemy, by the constancy of his defending.

Next, the manner is visible, when we see in the Witnesser meekness and charity, faith and devotion match'd and joyn'd; which speak of themselves a tranquillity of mind, a compassion for Sinners, a conscience of Glory, and lastly a fitness for Heaven. A stout defence is nothing, without Grace to accom-

accompany it; for both History and Experience can furnish us with Examples of the vanity of that sign; but where Grace does attend, it then becomes proclaimer of a *good confession*; it erects a Scaffold for *fame* and *martyrdom* together. And so the Saints of old, by the manner of their departure prov'd the gloriousness of their End. A *heavenly flame* appeared in their acts, which directed the Spectator to look upward when they dyed. And this kind of Religious Spirit all true *Martyrs* are endued with; therefore to behold them in their last part, with what piety they manage it, according to the rules of their Blessed Saviour, is to be alike convinced of the truth of their state, and what a Kingdom above is prepar'd to receive them.

Lastly, the *consequence* will declare it, when we see the *upright Man's Name* and his *Posterity flourish*; and the concern of *Justice* in his *revenge*, first by a *general confusion* of things, afterwards by a *signal punishment* of his *Persecutors*; Pillars and Monuments being every where built upon the Ruins of his Adversaries, to direct us in our Gaze, and confirm us in this Truth, That *Innocence* alone has the *Authority of Execution*, when the *Majesty* of its *Defender* is gone. If now other Ages we cannot recur to for one perfect Instance in every particular, our own can richly afford it

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us; for we find the *consequences* cleerly *exemplified* in our *late Prince*, as well as the *cause* and *manner* of his *End*; so that the *Demonstration* here is compleat, and the very *Eye of Sense* can bring in its testimony, that *the end of the righteous is peace.*

I would not be thought to anticipate the *Fast*, which by a particular *accident* is removed; but I am sure the *Day of the Fact*, and your own *Memories*, no accident can change. This is that *Fatal Time*, wherein a *Glorious Martyr* prepared for *Sacrifice*, with all those *Ornaments of Virtue* that either a *Sovereign* or a *Christian* could put on; and a bloody *Enemy* seemed over him to prevail, with all those *Crimes* that *Rebellion* or *Hypocrisie* can contain: Therefore by mentioning the time now, I do but pay it its due debt, and prepare your humiliation for the morrow.

It is not for me to attempt His *Character*, whose *Life* was the exact *Transcript* of His *Religion*; His *Government*, the *representative* of His *Goodness*; His *Writings* *Princely*, as if the *Pen* were His *Scepter*; but withall humble and charitable, as if none had offended Him; lastly, His *Sufferings* all along a lively *Expression* of *Christian Graces*, and a full *Argument* in themselves to reveal the righteousness of his Cause.

As little can I describe the guilt of His *Murderers*;

gers; whose *Inspirations* were killing; their *Fasts* but a *Solemnity to devour*; who mixt their breach of Divine Law with the mockery of its Maker; and to show wickedness was ripe, with an impudence of sinning invaded that Head, where the *Oyl* one would think were enough to protect it from danger. All that they could possibly boast of, was the current of prosperity for some time. But Christian Observers should weigh their End, as the Heathen Voraries did not mind the *Garlands* about the Heads of their Beasts, but the *Altars* they were led to: They might indeed (like those *Victims*) break loose for a while, but could not properly be said to share in a deliverance: The Peace they enjoy'd was but a *disturb'd slumber* before death, but an *unpleasant Feast* before Execution. Who can have confidence to affirm, That *Pharaoh* (who drowned so many *Infants*) had yet redemption from *plagues*, when an *expiatory deluge* was to succeed? Or that *Ahab* (who could swallow a poor Man's *Vineyard* at a *Fast*, and cruelly mingled the *blood of the grape* with the *blood of him that owned it*) had yet peace in his days, when an *Arrow* was made sharp to pierce him? No more can we call those *Victories Mercies*, that were constantly waited on by greater judgments; and we find by the Fall of those that had them, that to build *impious Trophies* upon the *Graves* of
Princes

Princes is to build upon *sacred ground*, that will sink them.

But passing by this Subject, I come now to infer some useful Truths from a general beholding of such Examples. And here I shall show

1. The necessity of converting our speculation into a Religious Practice.
2. The benefit of being upright betimes in order to our Peace.
3. The folly of Irreligion, whereby a future peace is utterly excluded; neither has it a present one for its reward.

1. The necessity of converting our speculation into a Religious Practice.

When the Psalmist bids us to *mark the upright*, it is not a meer direction to our eyes, but to our steps likewise; and our gaze little avails us, if it reform not the lookers on. The *Christian Watch-tower* is quite different from the Worlds; there the *Watchman* stands fixt, viewing his space, and lazily measuring the course of another; and the *reports* which are brought to him from *sense*, never alter his posture begun: But here we are bound to *turn and move*, labour and strive in our Office of *observing*; first advance our Reason to see the race, and then work our Wills to pursue it. Indeed a *bare speculation* is meer solecism in Religion; a work contradictory to the main end:

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We absurdly set against the designs of *Providence*, if we use not Instances to promote *Piety*, and the scope of his *Laws*, if our *light* be not serviceable to guide us in duty.

God in his *Government* abroad, leaves exemplary proofs, to train us up for his *Service*; and by express *Commands* in his *Word*, farther enforces the obligation; therefore a *naked Theory* of things is so far from becoming an ornament to our *Natures*, that it rather increases their *guilt*, by a flat resisting of his *Will*.

I know the *contemplative* powers enlarge our *Souls*; but they are the *active* that better them; the former give them the *subtilty* of *Spirits*, but the latter crown them with *goodness*. And it is goodness alone that qualifies us for *Heaven*; whereas subtilty may belong to the *Angels* condemned; who retain their height of *discerning*, as another addition to their plague; for they reap nothing by it, but a fuller sense of their pains. Would we then give our *Theory* a right advancement? Practice with it must be joyned: It is to no purpose to glory in *marking and beholding*, when it cannot separate us from *Hell*.

They are but *Falſe-Prophets*, that *ſee* and are not obedient to the *Vision*; ſo they are but *Falſe-Profeſſors*, and will finally periſh in deceiving their own *Souls*, that conſider the upright *Man*
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in his ways, but are never wrought to imitation. Balaam we read could get up to a *high mountain*, that he might see the utmost part of God's Israel: umb. 23. From the *top of the rocks he saw*, and from the hills he beheld them: But taking the coldness and barrenness of his station, he was utterly lost in that view; when it filled him with delight, but not with love; chain'd up his fancy, but left his corruption still free. But whoever ascends Mount Zion, he ascends a *fruitfull Hill*: He contemplates the righteous in their path, and by treading that path, enriches his prospect.

2. The benefit of being upright betimes in order to our Peace.

Peace is a summary of all Blessings, a most comprehensive word to denote the Perfection of our state; and being particularly referr'd to our end, it implies the security of our Happiness. Now the perfection of our state is in nothing more furthered, than in an early following the righteous Man's way; since it creates a present, and establishes too our future repose. As for the present Good we enjoy, it is perhaps unknown to the rest of the World, because it lyes deep in our Souls, and their workings we know are invisible to others; yet however the foundation of our quiet abides the same; and it lyes in an effectual restraining of our unbridled desires, in a powerful
 asswaging

asswaging of our griefs and fears, and a thorough purging off the guilt of our consciences. All these advantages a timely uprightness brings with it; and every Saint may discern them in himself; which is a sufficient allay to his outward troubles. What an ease must this be in the midst of suffering, to look within, and find there every thing still and clear, the affections being calm'd, and the enditements of sin made void? Nay, this is not all; but God comes in with the consolations of his Grace, to feed and refresh the inward man; so that could the World here make an inspection, it would be forced to confess of the perfect Walker, that not only his end, but all his progress is peace.

Let us next consider his future settlement, where you may behold him even in his death-bed (as if it were the stage of his triumph) how undauntedly he encounters the terrour of what approaches, with all the pleasure of a reflection. And he is supported in it two ways:

1. He knows the spring of his repentance was pure in its first rise, which begets an assurance.
2. That he has the testimony of after-fruits to confirm it.

Whence he joyfully meets that grim Serjeant, and while he is haling him forcibly to rest, he excuses the roughness of the seizure. E But

But this peaceable kind of spirit a late penitent is deprived of; as he is of all *honour* in the performance. For in both these respects his comfort fails; when in the pangs of extremity he seeks his God; though through the mercy of that God he may be saved.

His first discouragement is, that he knows not the purity of the *spring*, whence his repentance proceeds; nor can certainly conclude, that it is a *filial love*, but rather a *slavish fear*, that is the principle of the *current*. For Death he sees is before him, and all those evils that accompany it; whence he may well doubt those tears to be *false* which flow from him, and destructive too in their falshood, by a *shipwrack* of his Soul. And is not this want of evidence sufficiently tormenting, though the Soul should be privileged with happiness, since thereby all sense of it is gone, and the *sting* only retained of past pleasures? While in the mean time, the upright Liver continues down his *peace* by a *register* of his actings, and brings at the very last gasp a full and entire spirit to close with his apprehension of coming Joies.

His next discouragement is, that an after-testimony of *good fruits* is cut off, to confirm him in his fears. For how can such a testimony be produced, when he presently dyes after repenting?

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Whence suspicions must needs arise, and his Death be surrounded with dark shadows, because no space is left him to prove the sincerity of a good purpose. And what an Agony must a departure of this kind be (how gracious soever God be in accepting) when the past sins, we reflect on, terrifie our minds, and a future uprightness is denied us? whereas the perfect Man has the credit and support of a good stock beforehand, and improving it all along to his Death-bed, he can quickly rely upon Divine Mercy, as pardoning his frailties, and expecting no longer proofs of obedience. If then we value the Peace of Conscience as well as the other of Immortality, holiness of Life must be antecedent, for the better compassing of our end.

It remains I should show in the third place,

3. The folly of Irreligion, whereby a future peace is utterly excluded; neither has it a present one for its reward. Now the Folly of it is manifest, since it neither discovers a life of reason, which provides for good in the succession; no nor a life of sense, which provides for an immediate gratifying of our Wills. The succession of good is cut off, when our future happiness is obstructed; and an immediate gratifying of us is denied, while war continues in the Soul. How then can there be wisdom in the pursuit of Impiety, where

there is neither *hope* to tempt, nor *enjoyment* to satisfy ! The Object of a Man's choice must be either some *present* or *future* pleasure ; the *past* is not, because not possible to be enjoyed ; therefore when no time can administer delight in a course of sin, what motive is there in it to allure us ?

As to the possibility of attaining to *future* peace in a vicious custome, it is confessedly disowned by the *profane* ; who are convinced, that their want of Title does sufficiently baffle their Plea ; all they can pretend to is the *present* ; and herebyes the *mystery* of *sins* deceit, that it colours an evil with such *paint*, as to hide it from him that laid it on.

Man carnally reasons for the corruptions of his life, and forgets the *falsehood* of their covering. He passes by the madnels of courting a moment, and considers not the *lastingness* of its punishment. What then is Conscience wholly dead, that it should not wound the Evil-doer ? Has it quite lost its edge or activity in his Soul ? Why then does it so generally invade Mankind, perplex their Spirits in fulfilling of their lusts, rack them in all their sensual delights, and grow upon their pains, like a fresh Executioner ? For so is the force of it prov'd in the World ; and to break their peace in the commission of sin, two Images haunt them
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(of an equal terrour) God and the Righteousness of his Throne. All then a Sinner can expect at best is but a *short suspence* of his trouble; and whether the suspence be not a greater act of hostility from his Judge, he may well question. There is no tempest so hurtful as the calm before it; where the *face of danger is smoothed up*, and death suddenly conveyed. *Jael's bottle of milk* Judg. 4. 1 was more destructive to *Sisera*, than the *hammer in her hand*: For by giving him that drink, she laid him fast asleep to be slain.

But besides *pangs of mind*, and a more dangerous *Lethargy*, if they be wanting; let the wicked Man show any colour for *peace*, by being fill'd with what he enjoys. Behold! he is as much a stranger to an *ease of fulness*, as he is to a *rest of desire*; so that there is *war* in his very Feasts, to which he seems most cheerfully prepared. Nothing of the Creature can satisfy him, and therefore every thing is his disturber; he wanders for good, and finds none; he craves variety of Objects, and is punished by doing so: For he is thereby distracted in his choice, and has all the labour of an *uncertainty*. Go now and pursue the pleasures of sin; *Walk in the ways of thy heart*, and *in the sight of thine eyes*; but withall tell me at the same time, whether thou hast true cause of rejoycing, when thou treadest a *fools maze*,

maze, and art wretchedly lost in those turns and windings; which thy own appetite has contrived. Above all call to mind what *substantial peace* is neglected by thee; I mean those vast and solid joyes in another World, to which a loss in this is nothing comparable; how thou *barrere*st away thy Soul for a *lust*, and pawnest *eternity* for a *moment*; as if thy great strife were for nothing else, but to compleat the Character of the unwise.

I need no more insist on this Subject, and shall therefore beg leave more particularly to make Application.

To be speedily Religious is the highest Charity to our selves; nay (to add somewhat more) our best *homage* to *Princes*. For we thereby secure to them their Peace, and establish their Throne; we encompass them about with God's Blessings, and bring Heavenly Forces to their Cause. But National Sins raise Storms, set up *Hills* of provocation to plant *battery* against that very Seat, which God has fixt by his Power. Nothing so *traiterous* as *Vice*, nor so *disloyal* as *Iniquity*; and we have all sadly experimented the efficacy of its *treason*, wherein vile Instruments had never prevailed over such *Authority of Power*, and *Majesty of Goodness*, but that *general guilt* was their *Arms*.

Who now, that considers the advancement of
holy

holy living, will not contribute what he can to his own, nay his Princes Glory; endeavour as a Christian to purchase a Crown, and as a Christian to defend one? In the mean while, let no Instance of prosperous sinning tempt us to the practice of any corruption; for all prosperity of that kind is but the *gilding* of a *storm*; where God hides the Evil He intends, that He might double Men's ruin by the surprise. It was a true saying (though Jezebel spoke it) *Had Zimri peace that slew his Master?* So Men may thoroughly execute the worst Crimes, but that liberty allowed them is their plague; and their want of peace (as the consequent of their deeds) is a sufficient motive to dissuade them.

Neither should any be terrified with those crosses, which are many times the portion of God's Children. For how sharp soever they be, yet they cannot null the force of His promise: The promise secures them from overthrow, though not from suffering. It is like that *Bow* in the *Clouds*, set by God for a token of peace; *Showers* indeed do accompany it, but no *Deluge*. And O that we would consider the reward of *inward peace*, which is safely lodg'd in a good conscience! where the mind delightfully views its own acts, and calms the *passions* in the survey; where a *victory* over sin is followed with *triumph*,
and

and a pursuit of good with the rest of satisfaction where the accidents of life do not shake, and Providence is a Sanctuary from trouble: In a word, where Heaven it self is set up in all the light, beauty, and order of its frame. Therefore since no Plea is left for commillion of sin, but all encouragement given us to duty, with what ~~zeal~~ ^{zeal} should we behold, and with what affection transcribe the perfect man, that resembling him here, we may finish that likeness in another World, and find that uprightness (which is the peace of our Souls) will be the peace too of our Persons in a Blessed Eternity.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be Praise and Honour for evermore.

FINIS.

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